

# Drug Intelligence Brief



DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION  
INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

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## ***FEDERAL-WIDE DRUG SEIZURES: DRUG SEIZURES RANKED BY TOP FIVE AREAS***

### **Federal-wide Drug Seizures 1999 – 2003**

The Federal-wide Drug Seizure System (FDSS) contains information about drug seizures made by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, within the jurisdiction of the United States. It also records maritime seizures made by the U.S. Coast Guard. Drug seizures made by other Federal agencies are included in the FDSS database when drug evidence custody is transferred to one of the agencies identified above.

This report examines FDSS seizure data from 1999 to 2003 ranking the top five states by seizure totals for the following major drugs: heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine. The report also provides seizure trend analysis, and comments on how changes in drug trafficking and enforcement operations have impacted seizure totals.

### **Heroin Seizure Totals 1999 to 2003 (in kilograms, by state)**

Rank	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	New York 349	New York 416	New York 797	New York 1,064	New York 625
2	Florida 233	Florida 397	Florida 634	Florida 570	Florida 608
3	California 180	California 260	California 358	Texas 291	Texas 281
4	Texas 118	Texas 191	Texas 145	California 233	California 147
5	New Jersey 54	New Jersey 88	Puerto Rico 114	New Jersey 189	Puerto Rico 108

### **Total National Seizures for Heroin Totals 1999 to 2003 (in kilograms)**

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1,152	1,676	2,496	2,773	2,351

### **Analysis**

New York has led all states in heroin seizures over the past 5 years, followed by Florida. According to FDSS data, Federal heroin seizure totals have increased considerably over the last

several years. This increase is primarily due to larger weights per seizure incident, rather than an increase in the number of seizures.

In New York, seizure totals rose from 797 kilograms in 2001 to 1,064 kilograms in 2002. South American heroin has figured prominently in New York seizures over the past several years.

Nationwide, the average weight of seizures involving heroin of Mexican origin also has been increasing. For decades, average seizure weights rarely exceeded 2 kilograms. However, for the past several years, a number of seizures in excess of 2 kilograms have been recorded. In 2001 alone, the Heroin Signature Program (HSP) documented eight nationwide seizures ranging in weight from 12 to 74 kilograms.

## Cocaine Seizure Totals 1999 to 2003 (in kilograms, by state)

Rank	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	Texas 23,616	Texas 14,904	Texas 15,215	Texas 17,085	Texas 12,352
2	Florida 11,473	Florida 10,679	Florida 7,437	Florida 6,941	Florida 9,562
3	California 8,305	Puerto Rico 6,460	California 6,058	California 5,284	Puerto Rico 8,720
4	Puerto Rico 6,852	California 5,883	Puerto Rico 5,177	New York 5,096	New York 5,056
5	New York 5,462	New York 5,007	New York 4,266	Puerto Rico 3,936	California 4,641

## Maritime Seizures (in kilograms, by region)

Rank	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 37,454	SW Pacific 40,937	SW Pacific 42,794	SW Pacific 44,496	SW Pacific 33,202
2	SW Pacific 18,363	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 8,701	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 7,585	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 7,722	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 28,628
3	Gulf of Mexico 54	N. Atlantic 188	NW Pacific 2,408	Gulf of Mexico 185	—
4	—	Gulf of Mexico 129	—	NW Pacific 12	—

The FDSS and the System to Retrieve Information from Drug Evidence (STRIDE) record the location of multi-agency maritime drug seizures differently. The basis of the FDSS record is the location where the U.S. Coast Guard first interdicted the drugs. The STRIDE record is based on where the drugs were subsequently brought to the United States for prosecutorial purposes.

## Total National Cocaine and Maritime Seizures (in kilograms)

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
131,069	106,623	105,574	102,709	115,725

## Analysis

From 1999 to 2003, Texas and Florida ranked first and second, respectively, in cocaine seizures on land. The largest seizures were typically maritime, occurring primarily in the southwest Pacific and the south Atlantic-Caribbean.

FDSS data reflects an increase in Federal cocaine seizure activity in the southwest Pacific and the south Atlantic-Caribbean from 2001 to 2003. This increase can somewhat be attributed to the success of Operation PANAMA EXPRESS. This operation targets significant Colombian trafficking organizations based in the western and northern coasts of Colombia that transport cocaine through the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific.

Since its inception in February 2000, Operation PANAMA EXPRESS has led to the seizure of over 15.7 metric tons of cocaine from organizations transporting cocaine from Colombia into Mexico, the United States, and Europe.

### Marijuana Seizure Totals by Top Five States, 1999 to 2003 (in kilograms)

Rank	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	Texas 541,033	Texas 647,354	Texas 613,992	Texas 591,921	Texas 607,995
2	California 211,810	California 240,379	Arizona 218,743	Arizona 249,398	Arizona 322,374
3	Arizona 173,903	Arizona 199,414	California 217,662	California 138,924	Puerto Rico 159,760
4	New Mexico 32,555	New Mexico 44,241	New Mexico 52,414	New Mexico 37,780	New Mexico 48,398
5	Florida 24,691	Florida 19,055	Florida 30,190	Florida 14,771	Florida 16,397

### Maritime Seizures (in kilograms, by region)

Rank	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 11,508	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 12,537	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 5,726	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 8,245	S. Atlantic-Caribbean 5,381
2	SW Pacific 2,066	SW Pacific 951	SW Pacific 101	SW Pacific 6,796	NW Pacific 384
3	Gulf of Mexico 464	NW Pacific 363	Gulf of Mexico 65	Gulf of Mexico 4,675	Gulf of Mexico 312
4	—	Gulf of Mexico 257	S. Mid Atlantic 25	—	—

## Total National Marijuana and Maritime Seizures (in kilograms)

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1,073,538	1,235,180	1,213,930	1,101,133	1,224,213

## Analysis

From 1999 to 2003, Texas and Arizona have ranked first and second, respectively, in marijuana seizures on land.

Mexican marijuana traffickers move bulk shipments to the Southwest border by land, sea, and air. Transportation across the border is primarily overland by vehicle. Most shipments are smuggled into the United States through or between ports-of-entry in Arizona, California, and Texas. The majority of maritime marijuana seizures continue to occur in the South Atlantic-Caribbean area. Colombian drug trafficking organizations and Jamaican criminal groups move shipments of marijuana through the Caribbean to the eastern and southeastern United States on commercial and noncommercial vessels. Shipments frequently transit Caribbean islands such as The Bahamas. Moreover, transporters often use smaller craft for offloads and short trips between islands.

## Methamphetamine Seizure Totals 1999 to 2003 (in kilograms, by state)

Rank	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	California 1,346	California 1,773	California 2,387	California 890	California 1,572
2	Texas 382	Texas 621	Texas 478	Texas 368	Texas 577
3	Florida 158	Arizona 197	Arizona 186	Arizona 294	Arizona 538
4	Arizona 113	Georgia 93	Florida 92	Georgia 101	Washington 205
5	New Mexico 89	New Mexico 80	New Mexico 87	Florida 84	Georgia 88

## Methamphetamine Seizure Totals 1999 to 2003 (in kilograms)

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
2,771	3,472	4,013	2,475	3,714

## Analysis

From 1999 through 2003, California and Texas ranked first and second, respectively, in total methamphetamine seizures.

Mexico-based and California-based Mexican traffickers control “super labs” and produce the majority of methamphetamine available in the United States.

Mexican criminal groups control most mid-level and retail methamphetamine distribution in the Pacific, Southwest, and West Central regions as well as much of the distribution in the Great Lakes and Southeast regions. Mexican mid-level distributors sometimes supply methamphetamine to Outlaw Motorcycle Groups and Mexican gangs for retail distribution throughout the country.

This report was prepared by the Domestic Strategic Intelligence Unit (NTSD) and the Dangerous Drugs Strategic Intelligence Unit (NTSG) of the Office of Strategic Intelligence. This report reflects information current as of March 2004. Comments and requests for copies are welcome and may be faxed to the Intelligence Production Unit, Intelligence Division, DEA Headquarters, at (202) 307-8726.